

ACORN born in leftist revolution

Originated in strategy to 'hasten the fall of capitalism'

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By Jerome R. Corsi
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ACORN, the radical organization charged with voter fraud in several states, owes its origin to a revolutionary strategy developed by two Columbia University sociologists in the 1960s.

After completing his legal education at Harvard, Barack Obama returned to Chicago to work in an ACORN-funded voter registration project that developed directly out of this radical revolutionary strategy.



Obama meeting with ACORN leaders as an Illinois Senate candidate

The Cloward-Piven strategy

On the May 2, 1966, Columbia's Professor of Social Work Richard A. Cloward, and his then research associate Frances Fox Piven, wrote a pivotal article in *The Nation*, articulating "a strategy to end poverty."

In what became known as the Cloward-Piven strategy, the article argued a revolutionary approach to mobilizing the poor in the form of class warfare against capitalist forces viewed as exploiting labor and oppressing the poor.

David Horowitz, a long-time student of leftist political movements in the United States, characterized the Cloward-Piven strategy as seeking "to hasten the fall of capitalism by overloading the government bureaucracy with a flood of impossible demands, thus pushing society into crisis and economic collapse."

Cloward and Piven argued a "guaranteed annual income" should be established as an entitlement for the poor, a right the poor could assert and demand to be paid.

Arguing for massive registration of poor in existing social welfare programs, Cloward and Piven sought to create a crisis that could be exploited to obtain a fundamental redistribution of power in favor of the "have-nots."

Advancing their socialist revolutionary aims, Cloward and Piven explained the crisis they sought "can occur spontaneously (e.g., riots) or as the intended result of tactics of

demonstration and protest which either generate institutional disruption or bring unrecognized disruption to public attention."

The Cloward-Piven strategy sought to apply the tactics of the revolutionary civil rights movement, including urban riots, to the poor as a whole, transcending interest-group politics defined by race to involve interest-group politics defined by class.

Radical black activist George Wiley created the National Welfare Reform Organization, or NWRO, to implement the Cloward-Piven strategy.

Sol Stern, writing in the *City Journal*, noted that foot soldiers hired by the NWRO were successful in expanding welfare rolls from 4.3 million to 10.8 million by the mid-1970s. The result was that in New York City, where the strategy had been particularly successful, "one person was on the welfare rolls ... for every two working in the city's private economy."

James Simpson, a former White House staff economist and budget analyst, asserts in *American Thinker* that the "vast expansion of welfare in New York City that came of the NWRO's Cloward-Piven tactics sent the city into bankruptcy in 1975."

ACORN, Obama, and Cloward-Piven

William Radke, the founder of ACORN, was a member of the radical Students for a Democratic Society, or SDS, before he dropped out of Williams College in 1968 to join the anti-draft movement protesting the Vietnam War.

He next worked for George Wiley's NWRO in Springfield, Mass., before leaving for Little Rock, Ark., in 1970. In Little Rock he formed the Arkansas Community Organizations for Reform Now, an organization whose name he morphed into the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, or ACORN, to form a national organization.

With ACORN, Radke resolved to apply the Cloward-Piven strategy as a "community organizer" in an effort to recruit radicals to register to vote as Democrats, often fraudulently, in local, state and national elections.

Radke's idea was to create a crisis in voter registration similar to the crisis in registration for welfare benefits that Cloward and Piven had initially sought to cause.

Funded heavily by George Soros through his Open Society Institute, ACORN has followed a three-point strategy that James Simpson described as follows:

1. Register as many Democratic voters as possible, legal or otherwise, and help them vote, multiple times if possible.

2. Overwhelm the system with fraudulent registrations using multiple entries of the same name, names of deceased, random names from the phone book, even contrived names.
3. Make the system difficult to police by lobbying for minimal identification standards required of voters arriving at polling stations to vote.

In 1992, while he was working as a community organizer in Chicago, Obama headed the Chicago operations of Project Vote!, an ACORN effort to register voters nationally. In Chicago, Obama had his biggest impact registering African-American voters on Chicago's South Side.

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Obama has eliminated the welfare reform signed into law by President Clinton that was hugely successful:

Welfare Reform

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*, Public Law 104-193, better known as the Welfare Reform Bill. This law changes how governmental financial assistance is administered including: changing federal funding to states from an open-ended entitlement to a series of capped block grant allocations; sets time limits on entitlements and cash assistance to welfare recipients; requires most welfare recipients to engage in job activities (this includes work experience, community service, job training, vocational education); changes the disability definitions for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children who apply; mandates states to establish methods to enforce collection of unpaid parental child support; denies many legal immigrants from collecting SSI and food stamps; consolidates all child care programs into the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and changes foodstamp recertification requirements.

Welfare Reform's Unprecedented Success

By Bill Archer
Monday, August 10, 1998; Page A17

Opinion

Almost two years after the enactment of the historic Welfare Reform Law of 1996, theories abound as to why welfare rolls have dropped to historically low levels. Big-government types and even the President's Council of Economic Advisers quickly point to the economy as the best explanation.

But while the economy affects welfare caseloads, new studies show that an economic expansion alone does not drive welfare rolls down. The real reason for the 37 percent drop in rolls is that fundamental changes in the welfare system were passed by Congress and the states beginning in 1994. Changing values and expectations, not a bull market, are moving former welfare recipients to work.

The Welfare Reform Law crafted by the Republican Congress is the most significant change in American social policy in a generation. In writing the bill, our guiding principle was to fight poverty by helping families escape the dead end of welfare dependency. Thus, we required able-bodied adults to work, ended the individual entitlement to cash welfare, limited cash assistance to five years and imposed penalties on recipients refusing to comply.

The latest statistics show that in all but one state, welfare caseloads have dropped dramatically. Idaho's dropped an astonishing 76 percent and Wyoming's 72 percent. Other states have posted equally impressive declines.

It wasn't just our bill that made the difference, though. Welfare rolls started falling in the summer of 1994. By that time, President Bush already had waived federal rules and red tape so some states could try their own reforms. President Clinton continued this policy, albeit more slowly. Then the 1996 Welfare Reform Bill was enacted.

The resulting drop in welfare rolls is without precedent. Historically, welfare rolls haven't declined often, even during economic expansions. Moreover, the greatest decline in any period prior to our new law was about 7 percent. Compare this with the current 37 percent decline in rolls, and the magnitude of our success begins to emerge. More important is that many former recipients now are working and becoming self-sufficient, not dependent on a government check, making them better role models for their children.

Regrettably, some cynics still contend that the decline in welfare payments has come about only because "times are good" and warn that an economic downturn would reverse the success of welfare reform. But they are wrong.

Consider what happened during the economic boom of the 1980s -- perhaps the greatest in our history. Although the 1980s expansion created 20 million net new jobs, welfare rolls actually increased by nearly half a million.

Now consider the current economic expansion, which has created 12 million new jobs since 1991, a little more than half the number of jobs created during the '80s expansion. The first half of this decade tracks the '80s expansion; as the economy grew and added

jobs, welfare rolls also grew. Not until the summer of 1994, when half the states required welfare recipients to work, did the rolls start to decline. And they haven't stopped declining.

The real reason for the historic decline is that we finally said welfare recipients have to work and that work was preferable to getting a government check. We said Americans and their elected representatives expect able-bodied adults to support themselves and their families. And after years of rhetoric, Congress passed laws with teeth, and states changed the way welfare offices do business.

The real story here is that the culture of welfare has changed. A recent General Accounting Office report showing that more welfare beneficiaries are working noted: "Welfare offices are generally being transformed into job placement centers, and in some instances applicants are expected to engage in job search activities as soon as they apply for assistance."

Our new law represents the boldest change the nation ever has made in one of its major social programs. And as more welfare beneficiaries go back to work, I'm confident that more low-income children and families, as well as taxpayers, will continue to be better off than they were during the bad old days of welfare dependency.

The writer, a Republican representative from Texas, chairs the House Ways and Means Committee.

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